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Senate passes package preserving Michigan's waters

LANSING – The Senate unanimously approved legislation today to provide comprehensive regulations for water use in Michigan, said Sen. Jud Gilbert, R-Algonac.

Senate Bills 850-852, 854 and 857 create new standards for water withdrawals and permit programs for water users to help them avoid adverse impacts on the environment. These new regulations would help prevent a water crisis in the future and help preserve the Great Lakes for future generations.

“Michigan's water is essential to the future of this state and so are Michigan's job providers that rely on water in their daily operations. This legislation ensures both are protected,” Gilbert said. “Our work is not done. We continue to monitor water use in Michigan and will continue to strength the regulations.”

The package will:

- Put in place a system to manage significant new water withdrawals that have the potential to impact our water and water-dependent natural resources;
- Implement an interim standard that will provide protections for key designated trout streams by defining critical zones around the streams;
- Develop an easy-to-use model to replace the interim standard that will allow a user to click on a map and determine if water use will cause an adverse impact;
- Implement a permitting program for the largest water users in the state; and
- Authorize the creation of groups of water users to work with the DEQ in crafting water plans that resolve water use problems before adverse impacts occur.

The legislation now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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